

Just One Part Of The Love Story

By now some of you have been contacted by graduate students from the University of Mississippi asking you to participate in the oral history project interviews mentioned in this column last month. They provide an opportunity for you to record your family history for the generations to come and for the betterment of our beloved community, documenting our place in Yalobusha County. When the call comes, I hope your response will be yes.

While there are many similarities in growing up poor and black in the south, the stories of how we have prevailed and what we have accomplished vary. We know about the ongoing poverty, the suppression, the struggles, the strife, the barriers. But we don't know enough about the victories and successes. All are part of our journey.

One thing I enjoyed most about my *Outstanding Black Women of Yalobusha County* project was the many childhood memories this work brought back even if not all were happy ones. I will never forget one Sunday morning in 1961 getting the saddest, most horrific news that my young ears had ever heard.

One of the pleasures of my childhood was having my friends and cousins spend the night at our house. One time when I was nine, my cousin Humpie came over. (Her real name was Ruthie.) She was a year older than me with beautiful dark skin and even darker, thicker, long curly hair. We always played and played hard, and I hated to see her leave for home.

Best I remember that summer Sunday morning my daddy abruptly said to Humpie, "Come on girl! I've got to take you home." I was confused about her abrupt departure. I can't remember if I rode with them or not.

Finally, my sister Faye told me that Humpie's dad was dead. Dead? I could not comprehend it. R. B. Love had become another endless number of black men succumbing to violence in small town Mississippi on a Saturday night. I heard later that he had been hit in the head with a 2 x 4 piece of wood during an altercation with another black man who, as a result, was sent to prison.

I was petrified for my cousin Humpie, one of nine children now with no father. I can't remember if we

Dottie Chapman Reed, a native of Water Valley, graduated from Davidson High and the University of Mississippi. Her first project, Outstanding Black Women of Yalobusha, ran for two years in this newspaper and is also available at <http://www.blackwomenofyalobusha.com>. The second phase, Black Families of Yalobusha County, is now underway. If you are interested in participating contact her at quaye_reed@bellsouth.net.



By Dottie Chapman Reed

www.blackwomenofyalobusha.com



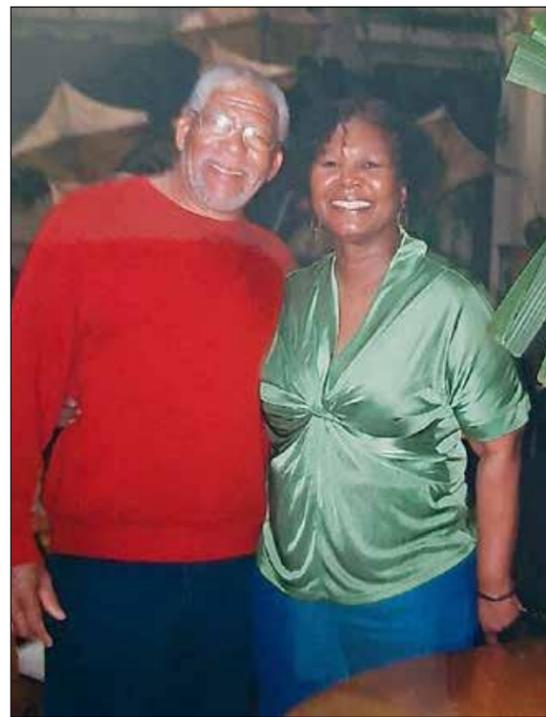
Rebbie and R. B. Love early in their marriage.

mentioned I had never discussed this with any member of the Love family until a few months ago.

Early last year, approaching this segment of our past filled with mixed emotions, I asked Rubye, whom we call 'Nick', if I could feature her mother in the Outstanding Black Women column. After more thought, we agreed that we would not ask her mother to recapture any of what must have been the most heartbreaking moment in her life – losing her soulmate and raising nine children alone. But more recently, when I asked Nick about our childhood and what really happened to her dad. She finally opened up and said,

"Daddy was 38 years old when he was killed. He lived from September 11, 1922 until August 27, 1961. His youngest child was two years old, and his oldest was 16. Dad and mother had a total of nine children, 21 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren, and 11 great-great-grandchildren. I often wonder if he had lived to see all of his children and grandchildren all grown up would he have been proud of us. I think he would have. I truly believe that our mother, our grandparents, your mother, people in the neighborhood, the ladies at Miles Memorial Church, school officials and others in the community played a significant role in the way that my brothers and sisters and I learned to treat people. You know Mrs. Butler (Pearline Cody) and Mrs. (Annie Kelly) Montgomery taught most of the Loves in school and church."

I totally agree with Nick. We black children who grew up in Yalobusha County, Water Valley in particular, were touched and nurtured by many strong role models and mentors. She and her siblings have all excelled and are leading successful lives. No surprise that when Nick's daughters, Pamela and Paula, write about her, they describe the same traits that I saw in their grandmother, Rebbie. I truly believe that R. B. Love would be more than proud of his children, grandchildren, great and great-great grandchildren and their mother. Their stories – their family history – are exactly what phase two of this project is about.



Joe and Rubye Carr at home on West Lee Street.

Our Mother, Rubye

By Pamela Cosby and Paula Carr

Our Mother, Rubye Jean "Nick" Love Carr, was born on June 1, 1947 to Rebbie Hoskins Love and R.B. Love in Water Valley, MS. We have been told stories of how, even as a child, she was spirited, strong-willed and opinionated. Our Mother is the third of nine children. Although there were a lot of kids and not a lot of money, there always seemed to be much love and many good times. Our Mother would often mention how she and her brothers and sisters always looked out for each other. They still do to this day.

Like many teenagers, our Mother picked cotton in the fields and babysat children to help out the family. She oftentimes mentions how the older siblings would sometimes sacrifice to make sure that the younger kids would have Christmas presents. When she speaks of this, there is never even a hint of resentment or anger, but rather a sense of pride that she and her brothers and sisters loved each other and were a team. This is just how she and my aunts and uncles grew up and sums up how our Mother learned to look out for others even when it was not convenient or easy.

After graduating from Davidson High School, our Mother began working as an administrative assistant for the principal of Davidson High School. This was prior to desegregation. After the schools were desegregated, she became the administrative assistant to the vice-principal of the Water Valley School District. During her 35 years of service, our Mother worked her way up the career ladder to become the bookkeeper for the Water Valley School District. As her job responsibilities evolved through the years, our Mother was tasked with furthering her education in order to keep up with technological advancements required to continue performing her job duties. One can imagine that she had some concerns especially after being out of school for more than twenty years and not to mention having to care for her family. We have memories of our Mother expressing concerns of being able to pass the required courses. We also recall her studying while working a full-time job, cooking, cleaning and taking care of her family without missing a beat. After the courses were successfully completed, she was relieved



The Love siblings at one of their reunions include (front row, from left) Ruthie, Carolyn, Dorothy and Rubye; and (back row, from left) Larry, Shirley, Edward and Annie. Their brother Kenny passed away in 1984.

even had a phone then, but I would not see or speak with her until the funeral. I did not know what to say then and we have never spoken about this moment in the ensuing years. The pain was so hard, so deep.

I watched Humpie's older siblings and felt for the younger ones, trying to understand how to react and feel myself. The emotions were fear, sadness, sorrow, grief and gloom. This was my first experience with death so close to home. It was the first funeral that I remember attending.

As time passed and we all grew older, I began to watch her mother, my cousin, Rebbie Lee Hoskins Love, much more closely. Now a widow and single mom, I thought about the emptiness and void she must have experienced. I worried about how she was going to survive and care for her children without a bread winner. I wondered if I would still be able to spend the night – if

it would be a hardship- if I would be a burden – an extra plate at the dinner table. I loved being in the Love house. It was in town. It was big and magical in my mind. I enjoyed being around their big diverse family, six girls and three boys. They were a gorgeous family; I thought the oldest cousin, Shirley Faye, had to be one of the most beautiful and graceful girls in Water Valley – a princess in my small world. They still call their mom "MOTHER!"

Persevered Cousin Rebbie did. Once the children were grown, she married Doyle Kerr. Now a widow at 93, she is being cared for by her daughter Rubye and son Larry. Humpie resides with her family in Chicago. I never told my cousin Rebbie how much I admired her, I hope she knew. As I



Willie "Kenny" McKinley Love



Rebbie Lee Hoskins Love



The sisters gathered before losing Dorothy in 2014. The siblings include (back row, from left) Dorothy, Shirley, Annie; and (front row, from left) Carolyn, Rubye and Ruthie.

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